

# WHEN YOU ARE 18 TO 21 LATE ADOLESCENCE

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

### SAFETY

- **AVOID** the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. **SUPPORT** friends you choose **NOT** to use tobacco, alcohol, drugs or diet pills.
- **TEST** smoke detectors in your home and change the batteries twice a year when the time changes, spring and fall.
- **ALWAYS** wear a seat belt in a vehicle and wear a helmet when biking or riding a motorcycle or ATV, and **INSIST** passengers do the same. **ALWAYS** follow the speed limit. **NEVER** ride in a car if you suspect or know the driver has been drinking alcohol or using drugs. If you feel unsafe driving yourself or riding with someone else, call someone to drive you.
- **LEARN** to swim. **NEVER** swim alone. **NEVER** swim in fast-moving water. **ALWAYS** wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket when you are in a boat.
- **PROTECT** yourself from skin cancer by putting on sunscreen when outside for long periods of time. **AVOID** going to tanning salons.
- **NEVER** carry or use a weapon of any kind. The best way to keep your family safe from injury or death from guns is to never have a gun in the home. If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, it should be stored unloaded and locked, with the ammunition locked separately from the gun. If children live with you, you must be sure they cannot get to the key.
- **AVOID** high noise levels, especially in music headsets.
- **ALWAYS** wear protective gear at work, when advised to do so, and **FOLLOW** the safety procedures related to your job.
- **IF YOU** are experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, **TELL** your health care provider, a responsible adult, or call the **ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-752-6200** for help.

### NUTRITION

- **EAT** three meals a day, choose a variety of healthy foods and eat meals with your family on a regular basis.
- **FOCUS** on fruits, vegetables, yogurt, whole-grain cereal, and crackers.
- **LIMIT** high fat, low nutrient snacks, such as candy, chips, or sugar sweetened soft drinks.
- **DRINK** plenty of water.
- **MANAGE** your weight through healthy eating habits and regular physical activity.
- **EXERCISE** at least three times per week. **MAKE SURE** you get an adequate amount of sleep.
- **TAKE** a multi-vitamin containing Folic Acid daily.

### HEALTHY TEETH

- **BRUSH** your teeth twice a day and **FLOSS** once a day.
- **WHEN** playing sports, **WEAR** protective sports equipment such as a mouth guard or face protector.
- **SCHEDULE** a dental visit every six months, unless your dentist recommends otherwise.
- **DO NOT** smoke, chew or use smokeless tobacco.

### MENTAL HEALTH

- **TAKE** on new challenges that will increase your self-confidence. **SET** reasonable and challenging goals.

- **EXPLORE** new roles without hurting yourself or others
- **LEARN** to feel good about yourself through learning what your strengths are and listening to what good friends and valued adults say about you. **TRUST** your own feelings as well as listening to the ideas of good friends and valued adults.
- **ACCEPT** who you are and enjoy both the adult and the child in you.
- **LEARN** to recognize and deal with stress. **SEEK** help if you often feel angry, depressed, or hopeless.
- **UNDERSTAND** the importance of your religious and spiritual needs and try to fulfill them.

## **SOCIAL and ACADEMIC COMPETENCE**

- **IT IS IMPORTANT** to stay connected with your family as you grow to adulthood. Talk with your family to solve problems. Especially about difficult situations or topics.
- **MAKING** friends and keeping them is an important life skill. Evaluating whether a friendship is no longer good for you also is important. As you leave high school and begin a new life with new interests, you may find that you drift away from some of your old friends. That's a normal part of growing up and becoming an adult.
- **TAKE** responsibility for being organized enough to get yourself to school or work on time.
- **AS YOU** head to college, the military, or your first full-time job, consider getting involved in your community about an issue that interests or concerns you.

## **SEXUALITY**

- **HAVING** sexual feelings is normal, but having sex should be a well thought about decision. Do not have sex if you do not want to.
- **LEARN** about ways to say **NO** to sex. **KNOW** the concept of "**COERCION**" which means tactics used to get a person to do something they do not want to do. The tactics include, **PERSUASTION** ("I know you really want to..."), **PRESSURE** ("If you really loved me you would..."), **MANIPULATION** ("You're the only one who understands me; I can't live without you..."), **BLACKMAIL** ("If you don't, I will..."), **GUILT** ("I took you out; you owe me", I gave up friend, party, someone else for you..."), and **PUT DOWNS** ("No one else will ever want you...").
- **ASK** your health care provider any questions you may have about birth control or sexually transmitted diseases.
- **NOT HAVING SEX** is the safest way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection/AIDS. **STI's** can still be transmitted by oral and anal sex.
- **IF YOU ARE** engaging in sexual activity, including intercourse, protect yourself and your partners from **STI's** by using contraceptives and condoms correctly and consistently. Ask your health care worker for an examination and discuss methods of birth control. **LEARN ABOUT SAFE SEX.**
- **FIND** a supportive adult who can give you accurate information about sex.